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THINGS THAT I REMEMBER

AT NINETY-FIVE.

By Mrs. Olive Cleaveland Clarke.

1881.

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EDMUND J. CLEVELAND.
Secretary.

October, 3, 1879.

I was born September 26, 1785, in the town of Williamsburg. My father, Nehemiah Cleaveland, was born in Mansfield, Conn., his father moved with his family to Williamsburg in 1769. There were four sons, and one daughter who was married to Asaph Wales. He died in the revolutionary war. She was twice married afterwards, and brought up two families of children, but never had any of her own. One son never married, the other three married, and had large families.

My father married Hannah, daughter of Jacob and Beulah Parsons of Northampton, who had eleven children, four sons, and seven daughters. My grandmother had triplets, one son and two daughters. They were baptized in church. The son died in infancy, one daughter at the age of seventeen, one lived to the age of 86, and had a large family of children.

My grandfather had but one son who lived to mature age. At that time, there were public schools in Northampton for boys, but none for females, girls were not much esteemed in those days. My grandfather had to educate his seven daughters, and help to educate other people's sons. There were no schoolhouses for girls. Some female in the neighborhood was hired as teacher, and she provided a room for the school, sometimes the parlor, sometimes a chamber. Such things have taken place since my remembrance. A cousin of mine came from Northampton to Williamsburg to attend a district school, because there was none in Northampton. She boarded at my father's. I think that must have been about eighty-three or eighty-four years ago.

My grandfather's son and six daughters were married, and had families.

People in Northampton lived very economically in those days. They ate bread and milk for breakfast and supper, boiled Indian pudding for dinner, with meat and vegetables. Those who were

poor, and could not have milk, ate bean porridge. It was considered a sin to drink tea in war-time, as some said it occasioned the war.

There were but very few time pieces in the town. I remember when my grandmother used to look at the sun-dial which was nailed on the well-curb, to see about getting dinner. When the sun did not shine, she guessed at the time.

Northampton were an independent people, mostly farmers. They raised all their produce, made almost all their cloth, and did all their own work.

My grandfather gave each of his daughters, three hundred dollars when they were married, to fit them for housekeeping. My mother was married during the Revolutionary war. I have heard her say that she did not have more than half as much as her sister had, who was married before the war came on, on account of every thing being so much dearer, which made it very unfortunate for her.

The day my mother was married, after the ceremony, the wedding party went to my father's home in Williamsburg. My mother road on a pillion, behind my father's brother. It was not the fashion for the bride to ride with the groom. They had to ride through Mill River without a bridge.

My mother carried a letter of recommendation from the church in Northampton to the church in Williamsburg. Some members of the church were unwilling to receive her, because they thought the church in Northampton not a pure church, but I think they received her.

My parents had twelve children, ten daughters, and two sons. One daughter died in infancy, one at the age of ten years, one at eight. Seven daughters and two sons lived to marry and have families.

We generally had good schools, summer and winter. I used to attend through thick and thin.

My father always provided means for his family to attend church. When they became so numerous that they could not be accommodated, he got a two-horse carriage, which would take eight of us. Most people rode on horse-back, two on a horse, generally a man and wife rode together, and carried the baby if they had one. In winter we went in a sleigh. We hardly ever failed of going. When the weather was tedious, and we rode two and a half miles to church, and then sat in a cold house, without fire, cushions, or carpets, and heard a sermon an hour long, we suffered very much. It is a wonder we lived through it.

Rev Joseph Strong was the minister in Williamsburg in my youthful days. He was very aged, and rather a dull preacher. His wife was brought up a lady, and did not know how to spin! Mr. Strong taught his daughters that art. Mrs. Strong had two dozen pewter platters when she was married. Parson Strong died of starvation. His throat grew up so that he could take nothing but liquids for a long time before his death.

While there was no settled pastor in Williamsburg, Dr. Lyman of Hatfield came to administer the sacrament, and he baptized six children, all boys. My youngest brother was one of them.

Rev. Henry Lord was ordained pastor of the church in Williamsburg, in June, 1804.

I taught school in the Nash district in 1805, and in Northampton in 1807 and 1808. There was but one church in Northampton at that time. The school house where I taught, stood about where the Court House now is.

His excellency Caleb Strong was then governor of the state. A gentleman from Boston told me that he was surprised to see that the Governor had neither cushions or carpets in his pew in church. The Governor used to go to Boston often, on his official business. He went with his own carriage, and it took two or three days to perform the journey. He had particular places to stop over night, but at one time night overtook him before he reached his usual

stopping place, so he put up where he could find a place of entertainment. He took supper with the family. A large dish of bread and milk was set in the center of the table, and each had a spoon, and dipped from the same dish. The Governor told the matron he would prefer a dish by himself, as he might get more than his share, but she thought there was no danger, and did not gratify him.

The first time I saw my husband was in 1808. We went up Mt. Holyoke, with some others. We went up on the North side, in a little foot path, and pulled ourselves up by the bushes.

I was married to Mr. Richard Clarke of Northampton, May 25, 1809. There were a goodly number at the wedding, I think none of those who were there, are now living, except my brother and two sisters. We came to Chesterfield the same day, and a cold day it was. We found the house full when we arrived, the neighbors had been invited, and had come to welcome us. We soon formed an acquaintance, and found the people kind and friendly.

There were many large families here on the mount, at that time, numbering from ten to fourteen each. The schools were large. The teacher was required to teach six whole days in a week.

Rev. Isaiah Waters was pastor of the church we attended. Rev. Asa Todd was minister of the Baptist church.

To go to Northampton we must pass through a turnpike gate, and pay toll, and also to Worthington.

When we first came to Chesterfield, we kept two horses, and rode on horse-back, but soon after, my husband got a one-horse wagon, which was the first in the town.

Dr. Robert Starkweather was the physician in this town many years. He died at the age of 93 years.

There have been six or eight suicides in this place, since I lived here, and as many deaths by accident. Twelve dwelling houses have been burned, besides other buildings. There were formerly four taverns in this town.

About the year 1827, a new road was laid out from Worthington to Chesterfield, which was a great improvement. A number of stages passed through the town daily, as it was the main road from Boston to Albany.

The people had great training days to prepare for war, and to get drunk. One of our neighbors had a bullet shot through his hat on his head in a sham fight.

Deacon Halbert lived in the west part of the town many years since. He sent his boy with a goose to a poor woman, for cooking. She asked where the salt was to cook it with? He said he had brought none. She said "he was a pretty deacon, to send a goose and no salt."

When people rode on horse-back, it was necessary for every family to have a horse-block. A large one stood at the end of the church in Chesterfield. It was ten or twelve feet in length, made from a tree hewed square, with steps at each end. It would accommodate a number at a time. Rev. Mr. Allen, who was pastor of the church one century since, used to ride to church on horseback, with his wife on a pillion behind him. One day he rode up to the horse-block, and she could not get on. He tried again and again, and she did not succeed. He rode home and left her to walk.

A neighbor of mine told me that when her children were young, she used to go on horse-back to make visits, taking one child in her lap, and two behind her, and go with all safety. At one time I was on horse-back alone, with my babe in my arms, when to my astonishment the bit in the mouth of the horse broke and dropped down, I was in a sad predicament. I spoke to the horse to stop, which he did. I then called aloud for help, and was heard by the neighbors, and was soon relieved.

I will name some of the large families which I knew when I first came to Chesterfield. Mr. Isaac Buck had eleven children. Col. Patrick Bryant had eight sons, and two daughters. Mr. Abijah

Whitton had ten daughters, and two sons, Deacon Macomber had eight sons, and four daughters. Mr. Samuel Reed had ten children. Mr. Luke Thayer had nine sons, and five daughters. Mr. Stephen Baker had eight sons and three daughters. Mr. Samuel Rhoades had eight sons and four daughters. Mr. Joel Warner had nine sons and five daughters. Mr. Carr had nine daughters and five sons. Mr. Eli Bryant had seven daughters and five sons. Mr. Isaac Tower had twelve sons, and four daughters, Mr. Asahel Bryant had twenty-one children. Mr. John Burnell had seven sons and three daughters.

In 1809, a family from this town, started in June for a home in the northern part of the state of New York. There were a gentleman and his wife, more than 80 years old, with their son and his family. They went with an ox team, and were six weeks on the road, but they all lived to see the promised land, which they had owned many years.

Many families have gone from this town to the far west since I lived here. The inhabitants have diminished some hundreds in seventy years. Many houses have been demolished, and farms left uncultivated.

The people here do not give up their religious privileges. They have a good church, and regular preaching of the gospel. There was a flourishing Baptist church when I first came here.

April 14, 1880.

I have lived long in the world, and am now in the 95th year of my age, great changes have taken place since my childhood days. One generation after another have passed away, and another has risen up to take their place.

All kinds of labor were then done in the hardest way. Cooking was done by a fireplace, and baking in a brick oven. Spinning and weaving were done by hand, as was knitting stockings and mittens. Carding wool was done by hand, until about 1800,

when machines were brought into use for it. There were no factories in the country for making cloth. Common people could not afford to have many calico dresses at a time, as they were very expensive. People generally lived on rye and indian corn. They had but little wheat. There were no people at the west to raise it for them, and no conveyance to bring it if there had been.

It was a great undertaking to move three hundred miles into the state of New York, to go through swamps when they would get so deep in mud that it was difficult to get out.

About the year 1795, an uncle and aunt of mine, went out to Genesee County, in a sleigh, to visit relatives. It was said they were the first people that ever went out there to visit friends.

In 1817, my father moved to Skaneateles, about two hundred miles west. In 1820, my husband and I started one Monday in September to visit my parents. We travelled six days before we reached the place of our destination. I cannot tell how warmly we were welcomed by our friends. I had two married sisters living in Skaneateles at that time. Our friends carried us to Auburn. We went into the State prison, and saw some of the prisoners. We saw the foundation wall of the Theological Seminary, which was going up at that time, where my brother said they would manufacture ministers.

Our friends went with us about seven miles distance, to see the canal. It was not completed, but boats began to run a part of the way. A boat was expected soon at the place where we were, so we went some distance to meet it, and came back on the boat, which was something worth telling.

My father died in 1843, aged 90 years and six months. My mother died in 1861. She was 104 years and seven months' old. We had a family gathering to celebrate my mother's one hundredth birthday. Seven daughters and one son were present, besides many grandchildren, and other relatives. My mother attended church the next Sabbath, with her eight children. She had remarkably good

health, never having any ails about her. One of her sisters lived to the age of 99 years and one month, another lived to the age of 98.

I have heard my mother say that when she was young, the law was that a person who committed suicide should be buried in a crotch of the road, without a coffin, and have a stake driven through the body.

Carpets were not in use about here in my childhood. When I was married, in 1809, I think there was not a carpet in the town of Williamsburg or Chesterfield, and not many in Northampton. I never saw a carpet until I was more than 18 years old.

Some years since, a little girl in this town went to church for the first time. When she reached home, some one asked her who she saw there. She said she saw God, thinking the minister was God. When I was young, I did not think the minister was God, but thought him next to Him.

When I was young, there was but one piano in Northampton, and an organ was an unheard of thing.

Some years ago, I heard an old lady say that she in her younger days went to see the city of Boston, and as she rode through the street, she was accosted many times by women who came out of their houses and asked, "Have you butter, ma'am? Have you butter, ma'am?"

My father and brother have taken the Hampshire Gazette ever since it was first published in 1785, the year I was born.

In 1859, we celebrated our Golden Wedding. A large number of our relatives came, some from the state of New York, some from Deerfield, Plainfield, and other places. A party from Northampton came with an old stage coach, which had been used many years before on the road from Boston to Albany, which brought many recollections of old times. Our house was filled with guests. We received many nice presents from our friends.

I had six sisters, and two brothers married. None of them lived with their companions long enough to have a Golden Wedding.

We celebrated the 60th anniversary of our marriage, May 25th, 1869. Many friends came to congratulate us, and we had many presents. Brother John Clarke sent two five dollar gold pieces, of the first coinage of gold in this country. They had been in the family many years.

On my 90th birthday, a few friends came in, and among the rest, Mr. William Cullen Bryant and daughter. They made me a present of a Shetland shawl.

I saw at a neighbors a few years since, a Bible which was in the bosom of a soldier, in a battle of the last war. It had a bullet hole in it which came from the enemy's gun. It penetrated but little way through it.

In 1802, there was a snow storm which continued five days and nights without intermission. It was six feet deep, and there was not a fence to be seen. People who rode out in a sleigh, carried shovels to break a track when they met a team. In 1804 there was another great snow storm, and wind which drifted it, so that it was six feet above the top of the lower room windows in my father's house.

I have heard my father say many times, when he thought a thing impossible, that it was as much impossible as it would be to build a bridge across Connecticut river.

My grandmother once told me that when she was young, and lived in Connecticut, there was on one Sabbath a contribution in church. Each one put into the box what he had to give. One old man went up and said, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give thee," and took off his old wig, and put it in the box.

I will write something about my ancestors. Joseph Parsons married Mary Bliss in 1646. They lived in Northampton. She was accused of being a witch. Mary Bartlett died, and Mrs. Parsons was accused of having caused her death by witchcraft. The County Court sat in Springfield, and Samuel Bartlett produced

some testimony on oath against Mary Parsons. She, knowing what was being done, did not wait for a summons, but voluntarily appeared before the court, and spoke for herself, saying that the righteous God knew her innocence, with whom she left her cause. The Court appointed a committee of chaste women to examine her person for marks of witchcraft. They then sent all the testimony to Boston, and Mary was summoned to appear there. The Grand Jury found an indictment against her, and she was imprisoned until the trial, which was about ten weeks. She was accused of entering into familiarity with the devil. She pleaded not guilty, and was discharged. She was a proud, high spirited woman, and her husband was one of the wealthy men of Northampton.

In 1806 there was a total eclipse of the sun. It was in June, at about 11 o'clock. The day was clear and free from clouds. The sun was hidden from our view, the air was chilly and damp like evening, stars were to be seen, fowls were affrighted and hurried to their roosts. There seemed to be a great change in the weather after the eclipse. It was cool through the season.

In my youthful days, there were but two or three stores in Northampton. These stood in shop row, as it was called. The buildings were small, one story high. I remember seeing the moss that grew on the roofs of the stores. My mother went to one of these stores to purchase calico for a dress. The merchant did not take down his goods and exhibit them, as is done now. My mother pointed to a piece on the shelf that she would like to look at. The merchant wished her to promise she would purchase it, if he took it down.

Mr. Hallock, who was the minister of Plainfield many years since, used to take scholars to educate, and fit them for college. He charged one dollar a week, for board, tuition, and washing. His salary for preaching was two or three hundred dollars a year. He laid up money enough to carry two of his sons through college.

Mr Hallock used to smoke. One day, two or three of his scholars went to the store, and returned with a long pipe for each of them, and sat down to smoke, this looked so disgusting to Mr. Hallock, that he told them if they would give up smoking he would, which they all agreed to do. Mr. Hallock once made an exchange with Mr. Waters of Chesterfield. He came Saturday. He said in the pulpit the next day, that he saw boys playing ball, Saturday after sunset, on that wicked hill.

September 29, 1880.

We celebrated my birthday on the 26th of this month, with a few friends from abroad. It was a very interesting time to me. It brought to my mind many scenes which I had passed through during my long life, and the great changes that have taken place since my childhood days. I have outlived my generation, and feel like a stranger here.

Our house was built in 1828, on the same place where the old house stood. We lived in the school house near us, while it was in building. The desks and seats were taken down, and we got along as we could. The day we moved out of the old house, while the workmen were tearing it down, I was cooking dinner by the fire place. A neighbor came in, and said he had heard of people having their house torn down over their heads, but never saw it done before. The workmen slept in the corn-house. We had a cooking stove out of doors. The district put off the school two weeks to accommodate us.

When I was an infant, a few months old, my parents went to Amherst, to attend an ordination, and carried me. In descending a hill, the harness broke. My father saw that they were in danger, and reined his horses against a tree, and turned over his load to save them from a worse fate. No one was hurt much. One of my mother's earrings was found in my clothing. Babies used to attend ordinations, and all public places, when I was young. The

saying is, "every generation grows wiser." In many things there is a great improvement.

When I commenced attending school, Miss Esther Ludden was teacher. She taught seven summers in succession. We hardly knew we could have any other. She was a very good woman, and taught us many good things. She would go through "the Catechism" every Saturday forenoon, but I think we did not understand it much. She used to take her Testament, and go out into the woods at noon, and eat her dinner. She tamed a squirrel, so that it would come and take dinner with her. At the close of school at night, she would count the scholars, and tell the number. Sometimes she would say, "Forty and two, just as many as the bears tore to pieces for mocking Elisha."

I well remember hearing the bell toll for the death of General Washington, who died in 1799. It commenced tolling about eleven o'clock in the morning, and continued tolling a long, long time.

My husband died June 29, 1876, aged 90 years and six months. We had lived together sixty seven years, "In hope of eternal life."

NEW-YORK, MONDAY, MARCH 21, 1881.

manifest that it is
Pope can long resist

An old lady in Western Massachusetts, Mrs. OLIVE CLEAVELAND CLARKE, of 95 years of age, has lately published a brief memorial of the social condition of that part of the country in the latter portion of the last, and the early part of the present, century. As might have been expected, she has given a number of incidents which have not the least general interest; but, as the pamphlet was intended for private circulation, it would be unfair to take exception to this defect. A few of the points made by her are of value as illustrating the changed condition of social life. At the first of the present century the towns in Western Massachusetts were, relatively, old settlements; that is, most of them had been in existence nearly, or quite, 150 years, but the manner of living was excessively

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simple and meagre. In the families of well-to-do people, in such a town as Northampton, bread and milk was the regular diet for breakfast and supper, while the poor who could not afford to use wheat flour and milk made their morning and evening meals on bean porridge. But to have meat more than once a day would have been looked upon as a sinful extravagance. Mrs. CLARKE's father was a fairly prosperous man, and during her youth she seems to have made visits in a number of the different towns of the district; but she says that she was 18 years old when she first saw a carpet. An incident she relates about the Hon. CALEB STRONG, an early Governor of the State of Massachusetts, is characteristic of this same simplicity of American life. The Governor used to travel from his home in Berkshire County to Boston in his private carriage, taking three days for the trip. He had defined stopping-places for staying over night, but on one occasion having been delayed he was compelled to spend the night at a private house on the road. The supper consisted of a large bowl of bread and milk, and the guest and family were merely provided with spoons with which to supply themselves from this common dish. This method was a trifle too simple for the Governor, who suggested that it would be well to put his portion in a separate dish, as otherwise he might eat more than his share, but the host replied that they were willing to take that risk, and the guest was thus forced to supply himself as best he could. Another interesting feature in Mrs. CLARKE's narrative is the evidence it gives of the prolific character of the New-England stock three or four generations ago. She gives the names of eleven residents of the little village of Chesterfield, where she lived in 1808, who each had from ten to twenty-one children. It would be difficult to find in a large town in Massachusetts at the present time a single family of ten or more children where the

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